

# HHS Office of the Ombudsman

Presentation to:

## Promoting Independence Advisory Committee



**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services

Austin, Texas  
January 19, 2017

# What does “om-buds-man” mean?



It means protector or  
defender of citizen's  
rights in Swedish

# Mission of the HHS Ombudsman

To serve consumers through prompt, professional and courteous service as a neutral resource for resolution of HHS-related inquiries and complaints



# Consumers of all HHS agencies

- ◆ Applicants
- ◆ Beneficiaries
- ◆ Clients
- ◆ Members
- ◆ Residents
- ◆ Patients

*We assist when a program's  
normal complaint process  
does not satisfactorily  
resolve the issue*



# Primary Functions

- ◆ Coordinate resolution of complaints regarding HHS programs and services
- ◆ Conduct independent review of complaints
- ◆ Make referrals to other resources



# Primary Functions

- ◆ Ensure policies and procedures are consistent with agency goals
- ◆ Compile and analyze inquiry and complaint data to identify serious, systemic and emerging issues
- ◆ Serve as the central point of contact for consumer affairs offices in the HHS agencies



# Frequently Requested Information

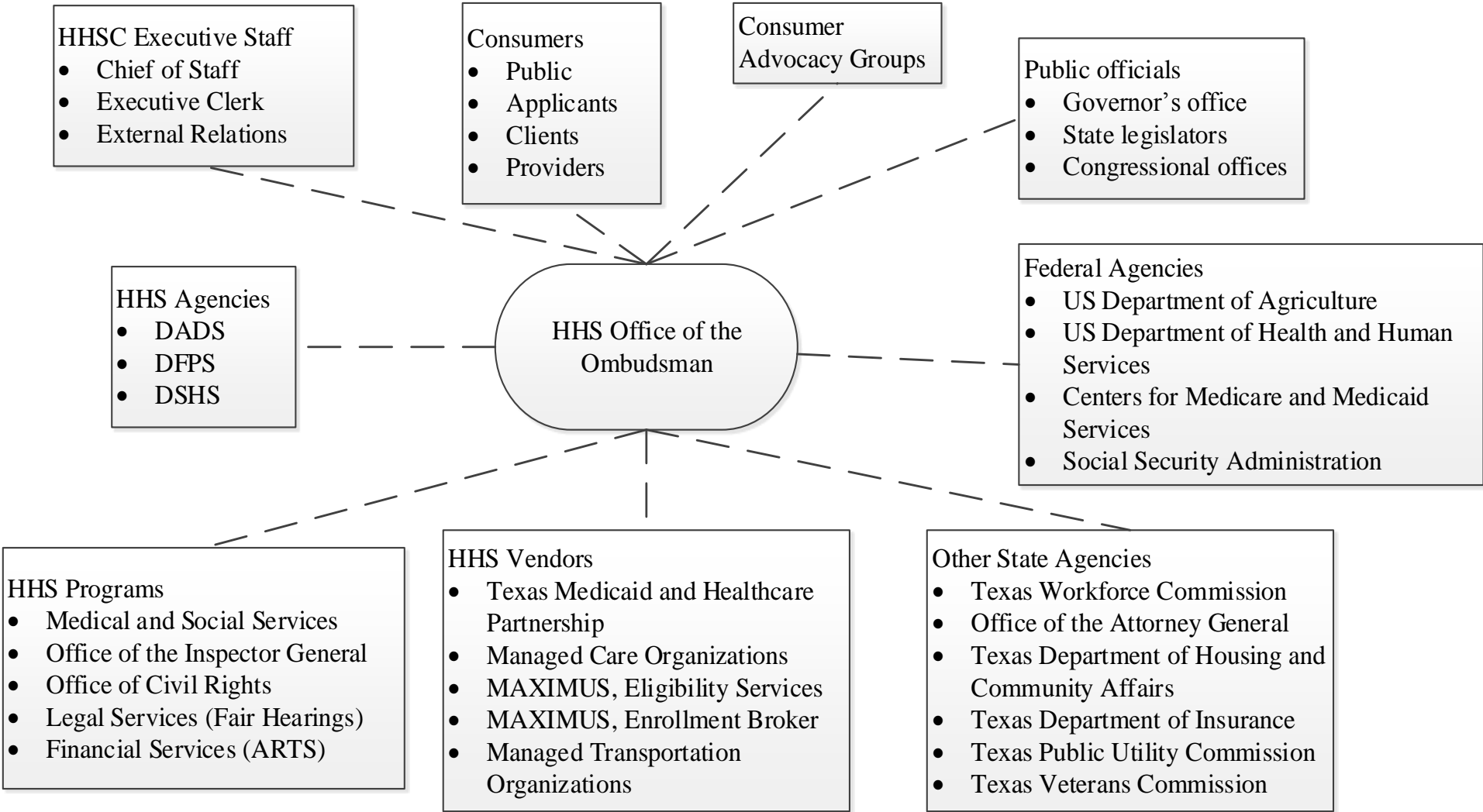
- ◆ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- ◆ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- ◆ Medicaid
- ◆ Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- ◆ Medical Transportation Program (MTP)
- ◆ Healthy Texas Women

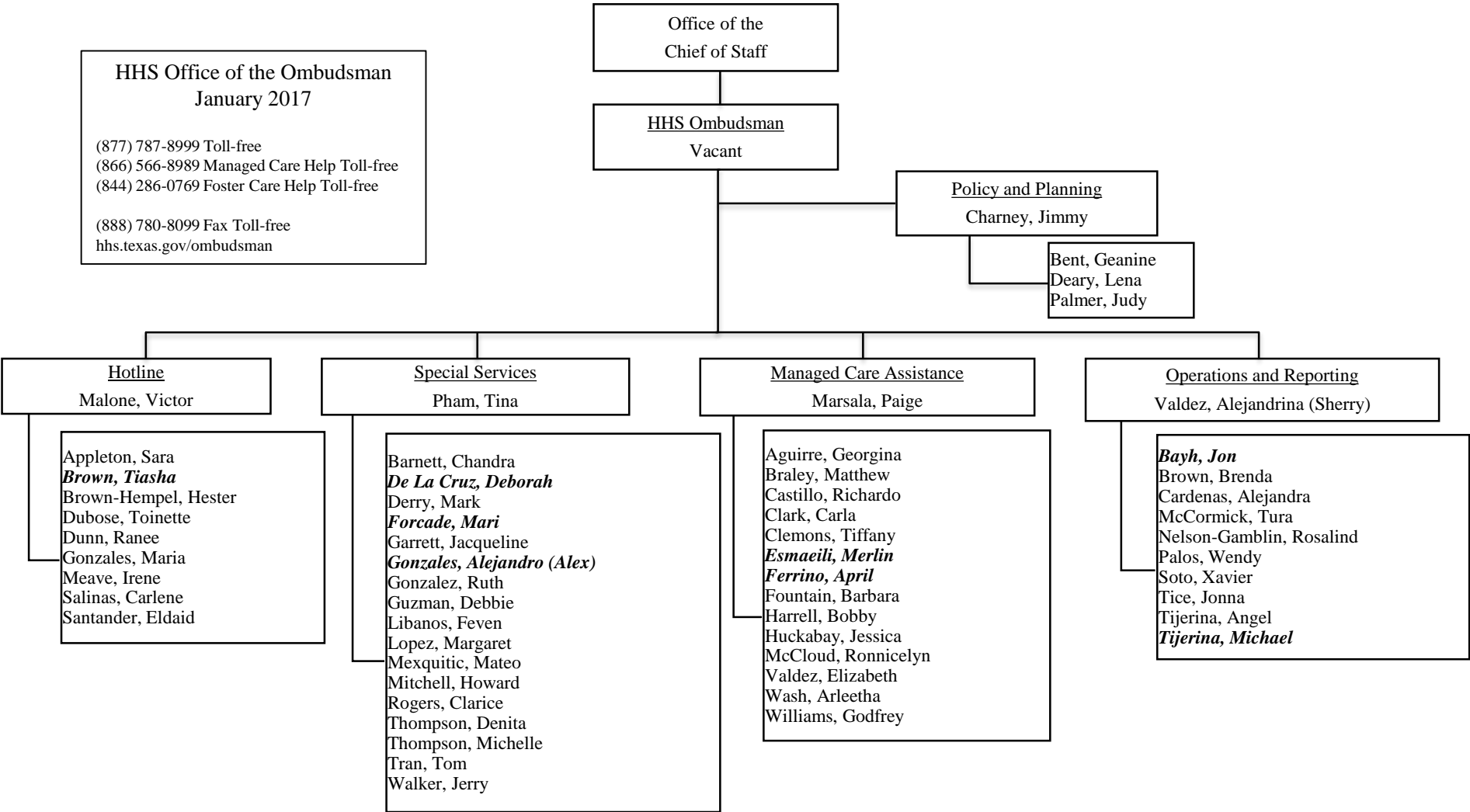


# Frequently Requested Information

- ◆ Regulation of nursing homes
- ◆ Reporting abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- ◆ Benefits for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- ◆ Early Childhood Intervention







# Hotline Team

- ◆ Receive, screen, document, and track inquiries and complaints received
- ◆ Provide clarification regulations and policies related to HHS programs and services



# Hotline Team

- ◆ Make appropriate referrals to internal and external agencies
- ◆ Refer complex issues and complaints to Special Services for resolution
- ◆ Promote awareness of programs and services available



# Special Services Team

- ◆ Receive complex consumer inquiries and complaints
- ◆ Handle high-priority and urgent issues, such as assignments from the Executive Commissioner, Legislative Offices, and others that require quick resolution



# Special Services Team

- ◆ Establish and maintain contact with HHS staff and others while resolving inquiries and complaints
- ◆ Prepare formal correspondence, when appropriate
- ◆ Serve as the central point of contact for other HHS consumer affairs offices



# Foster Care Ombudsman

- ◆ Serves as a neutral party in helping youth in foster care with questions and complaints
- ◆ Focus on Child Protective Services but works with all HHS programs and services
- ◆ Began operating in May 2016



# Managed Care Assistance Team

- ◆ Receive calls from clients who have inquiries or complaints related to Medicaid benefits
- ◆ Coordinate resolution for callers who have not been able to resolve concerns by working with their managed care organization (MCO)
- ◆ Intervene with Medicaid and CHIP Services, MCOs, providers, and other agencies





# Managed Care Assistance Team

- ◆ Educate clients to understand managed care
  - ◆ Rights
  - ◆ Grievance and appeal procedures
  - ◆ Advocate for themselves
- ◆ Identify most common difficulties
- ◆ Address problem trends in delivery
- ◆ Barriers to services
- ◆ Coordinate a network of entities that provide support and information



# Operations and Reporting Team

- ◆ Provide administrative support, including human resources, purchasing, and documenting standard processes and procedures
- ◆ Develop and analyze reports for use by senior HHS staff and external groups
- ◆ Act as an independent quality assurance check regarding calls, case documentation, and external correspondence



# Contact Us

## Phone (Toll-free)

Main Line: 877-787-8999

Managed Care Help: 866-566-8989

Foster Care Help: 844-286-0769

Relay Texas: 7-1-1

## Online

[hhs.texas.gov/ombudsman](https://hhs.texas.gov/ombudsman)

## Fax (Toll-free)

888-780-8099

## Mail

HHS Ombudsman

P.O. Box 13247

Austin, Texas 78711-3247



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# HHS Office of the Ombudsman

We help achieve the best outcomes in service delivery for consumers of the Health and Human Services System

*Can we hold your  
hope for a while?*



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